



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 147

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

No. 117

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 12, 2001, at 10:00 a.m.

House of Representatives

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The House met at 9 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT HEALTH

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this Congress is taking action to help protect world health in the fight against HIV AIDS.

In Colombia we are spending over a billion dollars to fight the grip of the deadly coca trade that includes eradication of the coca plant and aid to farmers to attempt to shift their production.

I find it ironic in the midst of this action by Congress that there are some that would have us reverse a long-standing policy and start promoting the sale of American tobacco overseas. Tobacco is the only legal product which, if used properly, will kill or at least inflict serious bodily damage.

The effects on Americans are clear to most policy-makers. Close to 360,000 Americans will die of lung disease this year. It is the third largest cause of death responsible for one in seven deaths. More than 25 million Americans are now living with chronic lung disease, and the use of tobacco is the leading cause in that condition.

Sadly, the impacts of tobacco-related lung disease is not limited to the United States. Tobacco was estimated to account for just over 3 million annual deaths worldwide in 1990, and that is rising to over 4 million deaths currently. It is estimated that tobacco attributable deaths will rise to 8.5 million within the next 20 years and 10 million in about 2030.

According to the World Health Organization, while tobacco use is actually declining in many developed countries, it is increasing rapidly in those that are developing.

In China alone, 14.5 percent of the deaths are attributable to tobacco. What is dramatically different in China is that in other developed countries with a similar rate the number of smokers is growing rapidly, such that two-thirds of the men are smokers before the age of 25. Few quit and about half can be expected to be killed by tobacco. In practical terms, this means in China the number of male deaths alone from tobacco is expected to be roughly 3 million annually by the middle of the century.

Mr. Speaker, it is sad to me that after decades of deception and death that we are starting to turn the corner in this country where we have hun-

dreds of billions of dollars in tobacco settlement that is available only after litigation. It is something that this Congress was unwilling or unable to correct to try and help reduce the number of new addicts and victims. It has opportunity to help not just the people who are addicted to tobacco but to help change the patterns in this country, like we are doing in Colombia to help farmers be involved with productive crops that are not destructive crops.

There are some states that have used tobacco settlement money to do that, like Maryland. I would hope that this Congress would not reverse course, that it would not start promoting the use of our tax dollars to promote the sale of tobacco overseas, but keep our eye on our priority, which is to reduce dependence on tobacco, help wean the American farmer away from dependence on tobacco, use our resources to stop the destruction of death and disease around the world.

It would be ironic that a Congress that is working to stop these abusive practices in Colombia with addictive drugs, that is trying to fight the spread of HIV AIDS around the world, would take a tragic step backward.

There was an attempt to insert in the agriculture bill an amendment that would reverse this 8 year prohibition on using U.S. resources to promote subsidization of tobacco sales overseas. Wisely, the Committee on International Relations, on a broad bipartisan vote, voted to remove those provisions from the agriculture bill.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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